

COMMON SCHOOL ASSISTANT,

A Monthly Paper, for the improvement of Primary School Education.

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CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS.

First Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools in Connecticut, together with the First Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board.

In Connecticut a board of State Commissioners have lately been instituted, whose duty it is to report upon the condition and means of popular education, and to make suggestions for its improvement. To the Hon. Henry Barnard, the Secretary of this board, we are indebted for their first annual report, in connection with the report of the Secretary; a valuable document from which we make such extracts as will be useful to our readers. It appears from the Secretary's report that he has personally inspected more than two hundred schools, and that he has had extensive communication with teachers and members of school societies throughout the State. He has been present at Conventions, numerous attended, held in the several counties. Of these he says:

"Resolutions pointing to the existing defects in the organization and administration of our school system, and various means and modes of improvement were discussed and adopted. County associations for the improvement of common schools were in every instance formed, and so organized as to form channels of united action in every town.

"The results show that the impulse which was created by the numerous attendance and free interchange of opinion at these Conventions, imparted a more active interest in the cause to many towns in the State. School visitors were induced to establish a higher and more vigorous standard in the examination of teachers. More systematic and efficient plans of visitation were adopted and pursued.

"In the course of last winter, one or more public addresses in reference to this subject have been delivered in one hundred and fifteen school societies—in upwards of fifty towns and

school societies, associations similar to those above recommended, have been formed, and have been, in many instances, numerous attended, enlivened and made profitable by discussions and addresses on appropriate topics—in a few towns teachers have associated together for mutual improvement, and have adopted arrangements for visiting each other's schools, and in more than forty school societies, a public examination of all or most of the schools have been held to the manifest interest of parents, teachers and children."

We would call the attention of teachers to the practice here mentioned of visiting each other's schools. No one thing will do more to improve the methods of teaching and governing. To the mind of every teacher of talent and observation, improvements will suggest themselves, and these by the visiting system are made common stock. No teacher who prizes his reputation, or regards the welfare of his flock, will allow his neighbor to introduce improvements without his knowledge. Yet we have known a teacher to have the deserved reputation of being the best in the town, while not another within miles had ever visited his school or known any thing of the secret of his success.

The Secretary gives a "general view" of the school law, from which we take the following:

DUTY OF PARENTS.

"The law asserts and enforces the duty of education upon parents and the constituted guardians of children as one of universal obligation.

"All parents, and those who have the care of children, shall bring them up in some honest or lawful calling, or employment, and shall teach and instruct them, or cause them to be instructed to read, write, and cypher, as far as the four first rules of arithmetic."

"In case of neglect, the select men may admonish the parent in the first instance, and for repeated disregard of the law they are directed to take such children from their natural guardians, and bind them out 'where they may be properly educated,' and brought up to some lawful employment.

"This is a monument of other days. Its enactment dates back nearly two centuries; and nearly the same length of time previous to the introduction of a similar provision in the school

law of Prussia. The coincidence is remarkable; and the actual operation of the same law in the two countries, and under governments so dissimilar, is no less so.

"In Connecticut there is no attempt to enforce the law, and any attempt to do so, would, I fear, be regarded as an unauthorized invasion of individual and parental rights. Hence our prisons, and poor houses, number among their inmates many natives of the State, brought up within sight of the district schools, who cannot read or write; and official returns show that we have thousands who were in no school whatever in the course of the past winter and summer.

"In Prussia, it has been stated on the authority of official returns, there is not a subject of that monarchy, who has grown up under the operation of her system of public instruction, who cannot read and write.

"Something more, therefore, is requisite than the mere declaration of the law.

"The actual condition of things shows that no reliance can be placed on the efficacy of compulsory enactments. Indeed, I have reason to believe that it has less influence in Prussia, and is less frequently resorted to, than is generally supposed."

For the education of the young in this country we rightly have to rely mainly upon an enlightened public sentiment. But public sentiment is too indifferent to be effective. It seems to possess one of the philosophic properties of matter, viz. inertia. We want the lever of an Archimedes quickened by the invention of a Fulton, to put this huge, cumbrous mass in motion. Then will inertia be a good quality, no halting is needed. We commend the following passage to politicians; it is worthy their grave consideration.

"How much better it would be in every respect, if the right of suffrage was based upon the evidence of school attendance and proficiency, than any property qualification whatever."

And we say amen to the following:

"Whoever shall discover a mode of securing a certain degree of instruction on the part of every individual of society, without violating the spirit of the age, and of our institutions, will do more to advance the cause of civilization, and our own American liberty, than we can conceive it possible to do in any other way.

"But if we cannot secure school attendance

by compulsion, or by the mode suggested, we can make it the interest of parent and district to patronize the public schools; and where the interest of parents is enlisted, the head and the heart will soon follow."

INSPECTION OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS.

The Secretary speaks of what we should call the criminal inefficiency and the gross dereliction from duty of the inspecting committees. We grieve to say, that it is not in Connecticut alone where teachers are employed, (both with and without the sanction of the inspectors,) who are wholly destitute of every qualification for this most momentous and highly responsible charge. Here as there, teachers who cannot obtain a certificate of the requisite qualifications, are allowed to commence teaching with the understanding that they are to be again inspected at the expiration of some weeks. We have even known the candidate to be furnished with a string of questions, and to receive a certificate on answering them at a future meeting. And in violation of the spirit, if not of the letter of the law, candidates are furnished with a certificate, certifying that they are qualified to teach a certain school. Again we quote:

"But supposing the committee are disposed to fix a high and rigorous standard of qualification, school visitors are liable to be swayed by their own friendly or selfish feelings, for they are not unfrequently called upon to accept or reject the son or daughter of a neighbor, a parishioner, a patient, a relation or friend.

"Hence, it has been suggested at several of the public meetings which have been held, that the board of examiners should be farther removed, and one appointed for the county, as in Ohio, or for each senatorial district."

This suggestion we have before made, and time has but confirmed the opinion of its utility. We would earnestly call the attention of the educator, and the legislator to the subject. The inspector should be as far beyond the reach of local influence as possible.

"Another important duty enjoined on school visitors, is to visit the school twice during each season of schooling, and to exact such exercises as may test the proficiency of the school. A faithful and intelligent discharge of this duty is felt in every department of the school; parents, teachers, children, all partake of the impulse given by frequent visits from those whose appointment is an evidence, or at least should be, of the estimation in which they are held by the community.

"But the present mode of discharging this duty is, in many places, inefficient, irregular, and formal at best. Schools are not unfrequently visited twice, as required by law, in the same week, and sometimes in the same day. In many cases it is done not so much to encourage the

teacher, or stimulate the pupil, as to secure a title to the school money. Until the past year it was not customary for any one of the visitors to examine all the schools. Hence, no one could compare their relative progress. It is the practice to allot different schools to different members of the committee, and thus to make the labor less to each individual, if not as profitable to the school."

These, also, are no local difficulties. They are common to every part of the country where the common school is known. Every person of sense must see these errors and their evil consequences, and what person with a conscience can connive at them?

But it is quite as important, though as difficult to effect, that *parents* should visit the school. If the teacher would make the proper appeal, there is something in every *mother's* heart that would bring her to the school house at least every month, to witness the child's progress and to cheer on its steps. What would be the effect?

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL.

Number of children in the State between the ages of 4 and 16, about 84,000. Number not in any school last winter, about 6,000. In the cities of Hartford, New London, Middletown, and Norwich, it appears that about one-sixth of the children attend no school, showing the attendance to be proportionably greater in the country than in towns and cities.

The non-attendants consist of—

1st. *The children of the reckless, the vicious, and the intemperate.* Here the Secretary justly thinks the community should interfere and educate the children. The reasons are unanswerable.

2d. *The children of the poor, the ignorant, and the negligent.*

The remedy suggested is a rigorous public sentiment.

3rd. *Apprentices and clerks.* Evening schools and libraries the proper remedy. It is remarked with regard to this class: "If they have been properly educated, so as to love study for its own sake, have learned to read with a facility that is itself a pleasure, and above all, if they have attained the true end of education, which can be attained as well in a common school as in a college or an academy, the power to observe, to reflect, to compare, to judge, to adapt means to ends, then they can convert their trades and their employments into the instruments of their own self education."

4th. *Colored children.* "Their education would be cheaper to the community than their crimes and vices, which are the offspring of neglect and ignorance. While the blacks constitute but one-twentieth of our population, they

furnish about one-sixth of all the crime of the State."

One of the greatest evils is non-attendance in the manufacturing districts. There is a law making it the duty of employers in manufacturing to see that children in their employ are taught to read, write and cypher, and that proper attention is paid to their morals. The board whose duty it is to attend to the enforcement of this law, wholly neglect it. Have they ever considered the consequences to the children? We fear this is an evil, too little noticed. Respecting this the Secretary says: "the interest of the children, the honor and happiness of the State, are involved in a criminal negligence of the education of any who are so soon to become the fathers and the mothers, the jurors, witnesses, electors of the State. It will be but a poor glory for Connecticut, to be able to point to her populous and industrious manufacturing villages as the workshops of the Union, for so many articles of luxury, comfort, or necessity, if they are also to become blots upon her moral and intellectual character."

There is one potent remedy for non-attendance, which it were well to adopt. Let the public monies be distributed not in proportion to the number of children in the district, but according to the number that attend school. This is the true and most effective principle.

TEACHERS.

In the 1218 districts in the State that have made returns, there were 1292 teachers employed,—some schools employing more than one teacher. This should be done much oftener than it is. To show how *permanent* the situation of a teacher is, it appears that less than one out of five have ever taught the same school previous to their present engagement. The average rate of wages throughout the State is for males \$15.43 per month; for females \$8.33, including the liberal salaries paid in cities.

The following are sensible remarks with regard to the best method of supplying the schools with good teachers. "The experience of the past shows that we cannot rely upon academies simply, for an adequate supply of teachers; much less upon our colleges. Their province is distinct. Their business is to advance the pupil beyond the sphere of common school education, not to review and critically master the primary studies with a view of being better able to communicate them to others. They aim to prepare the student to act upon men, and with men, not to unfold and cultivate the immature natures of children. But these academies and higher institutions present some facilities for educating teachers which ought not to be lost sight of. Buildings, apparatus, and professors are already provided. To make them efficient, Professors of Education, specially devoted to the

science and art of teaching, should be introduced, and the nearest district school should be improved and resorted to for practice and illustration of principles."

PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

The following we commend to the intelligence and the patriotism of every person in the community. "Judging from official returns, and inquiries instituted in four counties, there cannot be less than *ten thousand* children under 16 years, in private schools, at an aggregate expense of not less than two hundred thousand dollars for tuition alone—more than is now paid for teachers' wages in all the *public schools* of the State. This is at once the most alarming and convincing evidence of the low condition of the latter, as compared with the wants of society, and is at the same time a most serious obstacle to their improvement. All this expense would not be incurred without cause, and when once the pecuniary and parental interest of that class of the community who have a more intelligent and generous appreciation of the blessings of a good education is enlisted in private schools, the management and support of the common schools are abandoned to those whose heart is not in the work, and who are unwilling or unable to make the personal exertion necessary to promote their increasing prosperity.

"Nay more, I have sometimes found an antagonist interest arrayed against every effort to improve the common schools, lest they should, by being made as good as rival schools of the same grade, draw back those who had left. I would not be understood to cast any censure upon those parents who patronize private schools. They act from the highest sense of duty to their children. But I fear they are not aware how serious an injury they inflict on the public schools, by practically pronouncing them unworthy of their attention, withdrawing a class of scholars whose loss is severely felt, and by commanding, at an advanced price, the services of the best teachers. The tendency of the whole, especially in our cities, is to degrade the common school, as the broad platform where the children of the rich and the poor could start in the career of knowledge and usefulness together into a sort of charity school for the poor,—to make it common in its lowest sense, not in its original noble, republican meaning. To restore the common school to its true and beneficent position in our system, as the principal reliance of the whole community for a sound, practical English education—to draw into its support the means now so liberally expended in private schools—and above all, to enlist the intelligent and active co-operation of that class of parents who are now somewhat estranged from them in the work of improving school houses, selecting and examining teachers, visiting schools, en-

lightening and liberalizing public sentiment in relation to the whole subject of common school education; all this must be the work of time. It can be done. It must be done. But before it can be done, some evidence must be given on the part of the public, that with the avails of near three millions of permanent funds, and the command of all the property of the rich besides, they are determined to secure as good schools for all the children of the State, as can now be had in a majority of the private schools. Unless this is done, parents who value a good education for their children, will cling to their expensive but better private schools. The policy of the State henceforth must be, if she would make common schools universal, or in any degree so, to make them *good*, as well as *cheap*."

Our space will not permit us to make further extracts from this able report in our present number.

EXTRACT

From "*Means and Ends; or Self Training*,"
By the author of *Redwood*, &c.

HOUSEWIFERY.

I trust, my young friends, that whether poor or rich, there is not one among you, who will not class a practical knowledge of domestic economy among the *must have* of American females.

Nor, whatever your station is, should you lament this, as some unwisely do. The necessity that drives a lady occasionally into her kitchen, and acquaints her with the humble offices of domestic life, has a wholesome effect. It harmonizes with the general tendencies of our political institutions. It helps to draw closer the ties of social existence—to bind the rich and the poor together.

It has been truly said, that in aristocratic governments "the poor is not the fellow of the rich." They live in different spheres. In our country, the lady in the drawing room must know, for occasionally she must partake of the thoughts, feelings, and sufferings of the domestic in the kitchen.

And the self-respecting, intelligent American domestic knows, there are exemptions and advantages in her condition, which her employers' has not. She sees, that in an elevated station, there are extended responsibilities, and increased liabilities to suffering, and she learns to be content in her cheerful, though narrow sphere.

The changableness of our condition is another reason, and the one usually urged, for a woman's acquainting herself with domestic affairs. But, surely, it is an offence against your common sense, to urge upon you, what is so evidently a *must have*. Women in the highest stations, are made unhappy by the want of it. They are dependent on ill-trained domes-

tics, their houses are ill-kept, their husbands are displeased, and their children are uncomfortable, and too late, they learn that the knowledge of domestic affairs, which a little girl insensibly acquires in her humble home, is worth all the accomplishments they *half* acquired at boarding school.

And if this knowledge is indispensable to the woman of fortune, who can purchase aid on the right and the left, what must it be to the woman, who must herself make up the whole sum of the domestic prosperity and comfort of her household?

As housewifery is then your vocation, my young friends, I should be glad if I could place it in a light that would increase your respect for it. Consider, then, how many faculties and qualities it brings into play—how it may employ your minds and improve your hearts.

The science of domestic economy or housewifery, requires intelligence, judgment, firmness, and order. It demands energy, diligence, neatness and frugality. It is graced by generosity, disinterestedness, and cheerfulness.

It has been truly said, "that in a thoroughly enlightened community, no useful office will be considered degrading, nor will any be considered incompatible with the exercise of the higher faculties of the mind."

The philanthropic rule for governments and large societies, is to "produce the greatest happiness to the greatest number." A woman, in her little realm, makes all happy, from her husband down to the stranger within her gates, and even further, down to the faithful dog and useful cat, who in due time, receive their portion from her provident kindness.

Examples are better than precepts. I know a woman, who, if it were fitting an American, (which I think it is not,) might boast of high birth, whose refined manners fit her for intercourse with the best of any land, who is gifted and cultivated, and has the resources of an easy fortune. But, these will not always avail her. She lives in the country. Her year's supply of pork would be mangled by a half-bred butcher, did she not, (as she does) stand by him and direct him how to cut it up, what to pack down, &c. &c. If she chance to have incompetent domestics, she, herself, prepares the pickle for the hams, the staple of a country summer table. If one of her women is ill, and she cannot obtain a substitute, she does not overburden the other with the work of the disqualified one, but herself kneads the bread, and sweeps, and irons. No office essential to the comfort of her family, is omitted, because she does not know how to do it, or thinks it, (as we have heard some of our own domestics say, in their own cases,) "degrading" to do it. No useful office, my young friend, can be {degrading.

Do not imagine this lady is a mere housewife. —You might see her fifty times, without ever hearing her allude to her household affairs. If you were to visit her, you might find her entertaining with graceful hospitality, the best society in the country, and if you listened to her conversation, you would hardly believe she found time for any thing but the reading that enriched it. And yet, the most intimate associates of this, your country woman, would find it difficult to name a duty she omits.

I could point you to another woman, one of the most intellectual in our country, and one of its distinguished writers, who, when her husband builds him a house, superintends the joiners and carpenters, and from a certain amount of money, gets the greatest possible product of elegance and convenience of every sort; who is at the head of several ably conducted benevolent societies; and who understands the details of housewifery thoroughly, so that her home is truly the abode of comfort, and the fountain of an ever flowing hospitality. With such women for our boast, my dear girls, we will not envy the fine ladies, and *femmes literaires*, (merely literary women,) of other countries.

I know young women, too, who are the ornaments of our drawing rooms, who are good musicians, who read German, Italian, and French; and what is better and rarer, are well versed in the literature of their own language, who can, and do, if need be, perform well all the domestic services of a household.

LETTER FROM KENTUCKY.

{ THE BEE HIVE, near Allens-
ville, Ky. June 10, 1839.

MR. TAYLOR,

Dear Sir,—As this is the season for opening town and district schools, and as those schools are often taught by well meaning but young and inexperienced females, permit me who has spent much of her life in that abused place, a "school-room," to suggest to them, through the medium of your useful paper, some hints which may be for their encouragement, and the good of their pupils.

Summer is emphatically the season of enjoyment to children; buds, flowers, and sunshine are their delight; and are well calculated to make glad their young hearts. Books alone are insufficient for the child, as well as for the man, the mind is often tasked beyond its powers, at the expense of bodily health, and external nature is looked upon with indifference because seen every day. And is it not matter of regret, that the works of a benevolent Creator, meant to fill the mind with God, should be viewed with any other than feelings of admiration and gratitude?

Let the teacher of children unite culture of the heart, with scientific and physical education, and there will be more enjoyment to the child, less of recklessness in youth, less of dark scepticism in man, and more of happiness through life. School-teaching as a profession, is among the most honorable and useful pursuits of life; and to those who follow it, may, and ought to be, both interesting and agreeable. No one should engage in it, who does not feel it her delight to devote heart and hand to the good of the little republic, over which she is to preside. She should consider her own happiness and duty, inseparably connected with the improvement and good of her school, and be anxious to fill up every amount of time in the most judicious and profitable manner. Then it will never enter her mind to count the dollars and cents she has earned through the week, but she will think with satisfaction on the probable good she has effected, and plan new ways of improvement for the future; and instead of congratulating herself that so much of her tiresome task is done, she will feel rather regret that she has so little time, for the much there is to do. To those then who are thus nobly engaged, I would say modestly—Consider the wide field of usefulness that lies open before you, and enter upon its philanthropic grounds with a resolute purpose, and cheerful heart. Many a tender bud is waiting your genial influence to unfold itself richly to the sun of science, and will soon reward your labor by shedding around the sweet fragrance of moral and mental virtue. Let it but feel the breath of kindness fans it, and there is needed nothing more congenial or expansive to its development. Never believe you have a single scholar whose confidence you cannot secure, or whose love you cannot gain. Corporal punishment is degrading to the mind, therefore it should be your dernier resort for commanding obedience, it blunts the sensibilities of the mind, and if continued renders one regardless of his own, or another's good opinion; whereas, if you will take advantage of one plausible action, to convince a child of what great and good things he is capable, he will soon have a noble mindedness, which will make him shrink from a mean action with the spirit and contempt of an Aristides. Once learn the great good you are capable of effecting in a school of rude and boisterous children, and your success, like your exertions, will be unbounded.

There is in the bosom of even the most unrelenting, a chord that vibrates to the touch of kindness. Apply then yourself to the work with energy and cheerfulness, and there will be little danger of disappointment. What, indeed, may not the plastic hand of woman do when guided by an enlightened mind, and good heart! She may mould the roughest materials

into beauty, and bring forth shining qualities where seemed only burthensome rubbish.

You may sometimes feel that your sphere of usefulness is limited and unimportant, but be assured, it is far otherwise. You are not, it is true, the subject of a noisy and applauding multitude, yet your influence on this account, is none the less salutary nor efficient. You are operating silently, perhaps, but powerfully and happily, on the whole community, on the nation, aye, on the world itself, through the minds of the little beings around you, for each one is a part of the whole, in the great chain of existence, and its effect is communicated to the remotest link. Indeed, I can scarcely conceive a more benevolent or pleasing spectacle than is presented by a pure, noble-minded, and intelligent woman, surrounded by some twenty or thirty enquiring and anxious faces, each expressing a different disposition and each requiring peculiar treatment. In one she sees a shrinking timidity, and her kind looks, and gentle words, soon encourage the little trembler to come near, and love her. In another she discovers boldness, and an unbecoming assurance of manners, and her modest and dignified appearance, contrasts too strongly with his own, not to be thought worthy his imitation. In some she will notice a selfish and unaccommodating disposition, and in some a peevishness which will make all around them unhappy; but, having seen her from the first, kindly obliging to themselves, always composed and patient under the many trying circumstances which occur in a motley school, they soon learn the pleasure there is in making others happy, and will be seen yielding to each other's wishes, with an ingenuousness, a disinterestedness, worthy a Sidney, or a Howard. And she who has done this, has done much, compared with her own humble efforts. What have all the bloody victors of earth done for mankind? Be happy then in the discharge of a duty so interesting and so important, as that of giving proper bias, to the young and ductile mind, and bless Heaven for the privilege and ability.

Knowledge gained merely from books, is not all, nor even the most important for youth. Schools should be the nurseries of the kind and social virtues, of moral and religious sentiment as well as of scientific love. As the state of society is, it is not always either convenient or proper that children remain constantly with their parents, even in the early part of life; and well were it for the child if the teacher could feel something of the mother in her heart, and watch vigilantly over the morals and manners of those entrusted to her care. Cherish in your scholars an early love of truth and simplicity, teach them that if they have done wrong they can always be forgiven by candidly acknowledg-

ing it. Children are often induced to practice dissimulation with parents and teachers, from a fear of punishment. How often have I seen the little urchin clap his inky fingers over a torn leaf of his "new Spelling Book," in hopes of concealing the marked spot, but when told that those are the best boys and girls who own their faults, we may see the same little fellow come penitently and confidently to acknowledge his wrong, and may be gratified to see that he is far more cautious to commit a fault than those who receive habitual censure.

Schools are too often associated with the stern, saturnine looks of the teacher, with hard benches and close application to books. There is not enough of out-door instruction, by means of which the mind is made early acquainted with nature, and by it carried involuntarily up to nature's God. No selfish or unkind feelings can find admittance into that heart which is early taught to meditate on the bountiful gifts and guardian care of God, towards us, his great family. Show the most selfish child an orchard bending beneath the weight of fruit, and he is ready to share his like things with the whole school. Let him hear the babbling of a brook, or the clear shrill notes of the forest songsters, and his soul is in harmony with all around him. Point him to the deep blue sky above or the sunny earth around, and his little mind will know at once a calm and expansive feeling, to which under other circumstances he might have lived and died a stranger. Go often then with your little flock into the open fields, and shady groves. The effect is astonishing: by it, the feelings are refined and softened, the mind enlarged, and the physical health rendered firm.—I have seen my school when let loose on an afternoon, leaping and running with an elasticity and glee which does one's heart good to behold. In a moment their light bounding step has taken them out of my sight; in another moment they are back again, each one presenting her little gift of flowers or fruit. And where is the woman, who would exchange these simple offerings of simple hearts, for the unwilling homage paid to sovereigns? The perfume of the thousand crowns worth of jonquils which Louis fourteen compelled his menial subjects to strew in his path, was not half so sweet as that of the meanest flower presented by the hand of a child.—Schools, like home, should be the places where children meet each other with happy smiling faces, to receive instructions and perform acts of tenderness and affection; and in order for this you must be willing to make some sacrifice of your own ease, for their good. You must listen attentively to their wants, calm down all their angry feelings, hush their disturbances, pity and sooth their little griefs, kiss away their tears, and be ready always to restore kind feel-

ing.—Do this, and you will have performed a task which it will be pleasant to contemplate, and one which we doubt not angels behold admiringly, and Heaven will bless with its approbation.—Accept these remarks from one who knows well the trials and the pleasures of school-keeping, and who wishes to see it conducted on a more elevated and generous plan than it is generally.

Yours, &c.

* D. H. GOODRIE.

WHO WOULD NOT BE A FARMER?

In this glad season, when the earth is all around bursting into life and beauty, and nature is keeping holiday—when winter is over, and vegetation is waking again from its deathlike sleep—when the birds sing their matin-song from every bush, and man himself wakes to new life amid the activity around him, *who would not be a farmer?* For him, almost for him alone, bloom the fair flowers in nature's field—for him the feathered songster pours her sweetest note, and for him the face of creation wears a constant smile. Not so with the inhabitants of cities, or with the professional man, or the man of business, any where. These are shut out from the blessed influence of nature. Their business is with men—restless, ambitious, and oftentimes dishonest men—they themselves are all engaged in eager scramble for wealth and distinction, sometimes caring little who they trudge down with their unhallowed tread, so they mount upon the wreck, and they lose the salutary lesson of benevolence which may be learned from the ways of Providence in the outward world. They must maintain a constant struggle with temptation, or yield to its power. Accustomed to so much of evil, they are sometimes almost tempted to deny the existence of good. But the farmer pursues 'the even tenor of his way,' undisturbed by the passions of men. His dealings are with nature, and he may, if he will not shut his heart against it, learn true wisdom from its teachings. In the spring, grass, the opening flower, and the ripening harvest—in sunshine and in shower—he may see a token of God's love and goodness, and in the quiet of his own home he may almost forget the existence of evil.

Thus widely different are the conditions of the two classes spoken of. Yet we sometimes find farmers discontented with their lot, and eager to join with their fellows in the feverish excitement of speculation. And very often we see young men impatient to leave their paternal acres, and to seek, as they vainly think, some more honorable or genteel mode of earning a living; they had rather show a lily-white hand to a lady, as they measure off a yard of tape, than exhibit a manly, muscular frame, with a hand

which does not shrink from contact with implements of husbandry. It has, indeed, become one of the great errors of our time, that young men are deserting the true nobility of the country, for the sake of wearing a more delicate complexion, or living, as they vainly hope, more at their ease. Hence it is that all trades and professions are overstocked—that we have more lawyers than clients, more doctors than patients, and more parsons than parishes.

We hear men complain of hard times; mechanics cannot find situations; yet the country is actually suffering, and severely too, for a want of proper attention to farming—and why is it? Because many a man who should have followed the plough, has become too proud for that, and in his aspirations to be a gentleman has undertaken to wield a pen or to administer cataplasms or boluses. To this state of things, too, is to be attributed, to some extent, the present scarcity and high prices of provisions. The productions have been allowed to fall below the consumption, and this great produce country with its sparse population has presented the strange anomaly of importing breadstuffs from the thick settled countries of Europe. It is all wrong. Young men should be taught to regard the employment of their fathers as one of the most honorable in the world.

Your farmer is the independent man. What cares he for hard times, or high prices? Banks may fail—merchants' notes may be protested, and their drafts dishonored, but 'Seed-time and Harvest,' that old and stable firm, shall never 'fail'; drafts upon them are answered at sight, and the book of Nature, where the farmer makes his deposits, is 'good as gold,' and always discounts liberally. He laughs at, or more likely pities, those who are left at the mercy of the times, and compelled to eat the bread of carefulness. Beef at twenty-five cents a pound, and other edibles in proportion, does not worry him. He takes the favors Providence so bountifully bestows upon him, and asks few of his fellows. While want afflicts the rest of the world, he may snap his fingers in his face, as much as to say, 'Who cares for you?'—*Nashua Telegraph*.

GOOD SCHOOLS.

We commend the following to the gentlemen who are so indifferent about sustaining our common schools. It is wisdom in a nut shell.

"He that soweth plenteously, shall reap likewise."

"Why, neighbor Simple," said Mr. Fairsight, one bright July morning, when Mr. Simple was mowing in a lot where the grass stood so thinly that the spires looked lonesome, "why, neighbor Simple, you had a fine lot here, with a strong soil, but your blades of grass are so far apart

that they might grow into hoop-poles and not crowd each other." "Yes," said Mr. Simple, "I've been thinking I was almost a fool, for I ought to have sown a bushel of good hay-seed upon this piece; but the truth is I bought only a peck, and I scattered it about so much the thinner, and now I see I've lost a ton or two of hay by it." "Well," said Mr. Fairsight, "don't you think you was about as near being a fool, when you voted, last town-meeting, against granting any more school money for sowing the seeds of knowledge in the minds of the children, as when you scattered a peck of hay-seed where you ought to have sown a bushel? Now, remember, neighbor Simpleton, what I tell you—next year wherever there is not grass in this lot there'll be weeds."—*Boston Common School Journal.*

SOWING THE SEEDS OF CHARACTER.

It was just six o'clock, the 20th of November; the weather was mild like summer, the stars shone, and though day was approaching in the east, not a sound was heard except the shrill voice of chanticleer, the ticking of the time-piece on the wall, and a little snoring in one of the apartments, when my friend Honestus awoke his little daughters, Sarah and Jane, and his son Samuel; and, while his companion was making ready a simple and frugal breakfast, assisted them in adjusting their dress, and preparing to go and partake of it.

And now, reader, what think you was their conversation, while they were putting on their clothes? Was it about their breakfast, what they should have, &c.? Was it about some other object of only secondary importance, instead of giving the fresh thoughts of the morning to subjects of the first magnitude? Or was it on topics elicited by the occasion, and calculated to promote their mental and moral improvement? I will give you a specimen of it, and, after a few remarks, leave you to make your own reflections.

"Is it morning, father?" said Sarah; rubbing her eyes, not yet more than half open. "I should not think it was morning yet." "Yes, it is morning," said Honestus. "It is now the morning twilight." "Twilight," said the little girls, both as it were with one voice; "twilight, father, what is twilight? I never heard of twilight before." "Twilight," said the father, "is the time between the darkness of night and the bright shining sun; before the sun appears, it is morning twilight; in the evening, after the sun sets, and it begins to grow dark, we call it evening twilight. It is now morning twilight."

"Children should rise as soon as the morning twilight comes, and as soon as they can see to assist one another in putting on their clothes. What animals, what beasts and birds, I mean, are now slumbering and snoring, while the light is advancing, and the sun is almost ready to appear in the east? Do you, any of you, know?" The children did not answer. "The hog," he continued, "and the wood-

chuck, and the bear, and few other animals, and a great many men, and women, and children, sleep late in the morning, and seldom or never see the morning twilight; but the robins and other birds, and the hens, and the animals which are not stupid and lazy, are up early. Now, which do you prefer to be like; the lazy stupid creatures that lie snoring all the morning, or the lively intelligent ones, that get up as soon as the twilight comes on, perhaps, like the robin, and sing their songs to the great Creator?"

The children all liked the robin and the morning twilight, and resolved to be up every morning in future in good season; it is to be hoped they will keep their resolution. Should they do so, and should they, while getting up and dressing themselves, acquire a correct idea of only one word a day for thirty years to come, which shall be as important as the word *twilight*, what an extensive vocabulary will they possess at the end of that period; to say nothing of the physical advantages and moral lessons!

Now is there a parent in the wide world who cannot give his children this sort of instruction and education? Is there a father or mother who is not qualified for this task? Is there one who has not time? If it required set hours and set lessons, indolence or avarice might put in an apology. But no such thing; the father can converse with and instruct his children while they are getting up, and while they are going to bed; while setting with them, and while walking with them; at meals, and at other interviews. The mother can do it while she is at her labors, at the broom, or the distaff. No person in the wide world has so fine a chance to instruct children, especially girls, in such a way as will cause the instruction to sink deep, as the mother at her various avocations. There is not, on the face of the whole earth, another educator so efficient as the fond, intelligent, persevering mother.

Some may smile at this, and say, that children will never in this way acquire habits of close attention, patient investigation, and laborious study; habits which it is a prominent part of a thorough education to acquire. We deny the assertion—though often made, it cannot be sustained: this parental education, of which I have been speaking, is the very preparation which is required as a preliminary to those necessary habits. It gives the love of study, a love which, as things are now, is exceedingly rare; and for want of which it is that the world is deluged with dull task-work, superficial scholarship, and learned individuals without minds or souls.

Some will say, too, that if we are constantly talking with children, in a way calculated to instruct them, we shall finally disgust them with every thing of the kind, and defeat our object. This, however, is not at all necessary; our conversation need not, of course, always turn on the meaning of words, or the importance of early rising. A thousand forms and topics of conversation will instruct, or at least improve and elevate. The very plays of children are among the more interesting and important means of

improving, not their health only, but their minds and hearts; I am sorry that so many parents, and even not a few teachers, seem disposed to stand aloof from the recreations of their children.

But the time! parents cannot find time to be always with their children—this will be, as it ever has been, the cry. Yes; and it always will be so 'till parents begin to understand what education is, and that is the principal business of domestic life.

I do not say, however, that the father, no, nor the mother, should be always in company of the child; on the contrary, I believe it better that he should be sometimes left to himself. But I do say, with confidence, that be the other instructors and educators of a child ever so numerous, the mother, aided by the father and the rest of the family, should be the principal. They should be so, because they are the most nearly concerned in their welfare, because they love them most, and because their lessons will be deepest and most permanent.

The only solid objection to the views I have advanced, is the want of time; but this, as we have seen, is not very weighty after all. When God commanded the Israelites to teach their offspring in the house, by the way-side, at lying down and at rising up, think ye he would have accepted as an excuse for neglect that they had no time? My friend Honestus, had he been of their number, would have found time; and his wife would have found more time than he. She does not contrive to render her household concern so numerous and complicated, that they consume her whole time and strength. Her arrangements are so simplified, that though she has a large family, she can not only give her children a great deal of useful information, and a great many moral lessons while leisurely going on with her very labors; but she can also redeem from her daily employments half her waking hours, for the noble and still more appropriate work of sitting, walking, reading, conversing, and playing with them. And this very mother *might do*, as well as the wife of Honestus, did she understand the importance and necessity of so doing, and were she more anxious to educate her children usefully than fashionably.

Honestus and his companion had one more habit which is exceedingly valuable in the education of our children; the lessons, physical, intellectual, or moral, which he inculcated by precept, were sustained by example: and what was begun in precept by the child, was extended or perfected elsewhere.

Thus, in the case to which I have just alluded, of a fine November morning, a sequel to the lesson which had been inculcated at rising, was introduced at the breakfast table. By some means or other, I do not now recollect how, the word *gabardine* was introduced. It happened to be present; but, though I was brought up with a dictionary before me, in which the first word, under the letter G, was *Gabardine*, which, from early association, I most distinctly recollected as soon as the word was mentioned, I could not, for the life of me, attach any meaning to it, and there was not more than one or two at the table who could.

But, as I said before, the word was introduced and we were resolved to become acquainted with it. So Honestus took his dictionary, which, by the way, he keeps always at hand; and though he was himself acquainted with the definition of the word, sought it only, and read it to the rest. It is a coarse loose frock, or upper garment, and a good substantial old English word it is.

To say nothing, however, of the value of the word itself, the course Honestus took secured several important advantages.

First. It proved to his children that he was earnest in his efforts to have them to acquire language; since it was study which he was himself daily pursuing.

Children are imitative creatures: how often have I seen young children imitate in their plays, the employments of those around them, especially of those whom they love! How often, did I say—left to themselves, they almost always do this. The little girl wants her doll—her babe rather, her chairs, her table, her side-board, her tea-cups, her mirror, &c.; or perhaps she receives company, or keeps school: and the little boy apes the employments of his father and others, with nearly the same exactness. But surely I need not repeat what every one knows; and yet, where is the parent to be found, once in a hundred times, who makes the proper inference, and governs himself accordingly! Where are the father and mother, who pursue the same course of conduct in every thing, especially in morals, at table and elsewhere in the family, which they require their children to pursue! Where is the parent, Honestus and a few like him excepted, who, in order to have a son fond of chemistry, or geology, or language, first makes it one of the subjects of familiar conversation and experiment in the family?

Secondly. The practice of consulting a dictionary, and finding the correct definition of all words which we do not fully understand, is one of the very best means which can possibly be devised for enriching and extending a person's vocabulary, and the sooner children and other people are brought into it the better. I have known one man whose intelligence was quite above mediocrity for the region where he lived, who owed it entirely, or almost entirely, to this habit.

Thirdly. It leads to the habit of general observation of nature around us. The world is a great dictionary, full of words of the most interesting and important meaning, and yet how few of us ever consult it. We may, indeed, and often do, know that such or such a word stands in such and such a place, as I knew galardine did; but we might as well be ignorant on the subject as to any practical purpose. We have eyes, but see not; ears, but hear not, neither do we understand what is going before us.

Let me again say, I would not force the conversation of the family, at table or else-where, upon important topics until they become tired of it or feel constraint: neither would I inculcate the idea by precept or example, that I regarded all study as only mere play; and yet, until the taste for study has been formed and encouraged in this manner, and under these circumstances, and until it is felt, ad-

mired, and increased by more or less of parental co-operation, those teachers labor almost in vain who attempt to make good scholars of our children. So strong, indeed, is the love of knowledge and inquiry imprinted in the human mind, that a scholar may be found here and there in spite of bad circumstances; but the mass will continue to be parrots or dolts, and ignorant and thoughtless parents will perhaps continue to wonder why so few of these children are good scholars.

EXTRACTS

From Cousin's Report on Common School Education in Holland. Translated by Leonard Horner, with a preface and appendix, pp. 295. London 1833.

"Experience has sufficiently proved that it is vain to expect that the evils, arising from a different number of schools, from the incompetency of teachers, and from the imperfections of the system, upon which the schools for the humbler classes are conducted, will never be corrected, unless the subject be taken up by parliament, and the evil be remedied by some general legislative measure. It must be abundantly clear, by this time, that the maxim, *laissez nous faire*, however true in matters of trade, is applicable only in a limited extent in education, and least of all in the case of such schools as we are now considering. If there had been a general demand for a good education, the present state of things would probably not have existed; but it is notorious that, among a very large portion of the people, no such demand exists; they have not yet, to use a commercial phrase, acquired any taste for the commodity, and they are not the least aware of the many losses they sustain from the want of it. Many of them find they can get their daily necessities supplied without any education at all; others are contented with a base coin bearing the stamp of education, the worthlessness of which they are ignorant of, because they find it passes currently; and therefore they do not concern themselves about enquiring into its intrinsic worth."—Page 16, *preface*.

"It would be difficult to imagine a more efficient system of inspection than that in Holland. Each province, or in the language of our administrative divisions of France, each department has its own departmental commissions for primary schools. It consists of all inspectors of the several school districts into which the province is divided. No one of these districts is equal in extent to one of our *arrondissements*, and they are all somewhat larger than one of our *cantons*. Every inspector resides in his own district, and he is bound to inspect every school at least twice a year, and he has jurisdiction over the primary schools of every grade in the district. Without his approval, no one can be either a public or a private teacher; and no public or

private teacher can retain his situation, or be promoted or receive any gratification, [emolument] unless with his approbation; for no commissioner has any power in his absence, and he is either the chairman or the influential member of all meetings that are held. He is thus at the head of the whole of the primary instruction, in his particular district. He is required to repair, three times a year, to the chief town of the province, to meet the other district inspectors of the province, and a conference is held, with the governor of the province presiding, which lasts for a fortnight or three weeks, during which time each inspector reads a report upon the state of his district, and brings before the meeting all such questions as belong to them. As each province has its own particular code of regulations, for its primary schools, founded upon the law of its general regulations, the provincial board examines whether all the proceedings of the several inspectors have been conformable to that particular code; they look to the strict and uniform execution of the code, they pass such measures as belong to them to originate, and they draw up the annual report which is to be presented to the central administration, and submit such amendments as appear to them necessary or useful, and of which the central administration is constituted the judge. Under the minister of the interior there is a high functionary, the Inspector General of Primary instruction: and from time to time a general meeting is summoned by the government, to be held at the Hague, to which each provincial board sends a deputy; and thus from the inspector general at the Hague, down to the local inspector of the smallest district, the whole of the primary instruction is under the direction of inspectors. Each inspector has charge of his own district; each provincial board has charge of its province; and the general meeting, which may be called the assembly of the states general of primary instruction, has charge of the whole kingdom. All these authorities are in their several degrees analogous in their nature; for all are public functionaries, all are paid and responsible officers. The district inspector is responsible to the provincial board of commissioners; and they are responsible to the Inspector General and the Minister of the Interior. In this learned and very simple hierarchy, the powers of every member are clearly defined and limited."—*Cousins' Report on Education in Holland, 1837*.

"It would be difficult to describe the effects produced upon us by the first primary school we entered, on our arrival in Holland. It was one of those maintained at the public expense, for the children of the poorest classes, for those who, in so many other countries, are left to drag out a miserable existence on the highways, ex-

exercising the trade of beggars, until they have become strong enough to follow that of thieves. Two large rooms, well lighted and well cultivated, contained three hundred of those children, all cleanly dressed, arrayed themselves, without any confusion, without noise, without rudeness, doing all they were desired, in obedience to signals, without the necessity of the master saying a word. They learn by sure and ready methods, to read fluently, to write a good and correct hand, to understand such arithmetic as is required for ordinary life, both mental and written, and to express their thoughts clearly in short written exercises. The books put into their hands, and the examples they get to write, advance by such judicious gradations, and the precepts and examples are intermingled so skillfully, that the children imbibe, at one and the same time, the truths of religion, the maxims of morality, and that knowledge which will be useful to them, and afford them consolation in their unhappy lot. By means of frequent questions, and by encouraging them to state their difficulties, it is fully ascertained that they understand what they read. Prayers and hymns, sung by the whole school, both composed expressly for these children, and all breathing a spirit of duty and of gratitude, give a charm to the business of teaching, while at the same time they impress, upon it a religious and benevolent character calculated to produce lasting effects. One master and two assistants, who might themselves be taken for pupils, maintain complete order among this large number of children, without any speaking, or angry words, or corporeal punishment; but by interesting them in what they are about, and keeping their attention constantly alive."—*Cuvier's Report on Public Instruction in Holland, 1810, given as Appendix D. to the English Translation of Cousins' Report on Education in Holland.*

"No sooner has an infant begun to exercise its senses, first, probably, the touch in perceiving warmth,—to open its eyes,—to take food,—to perceive colors,—to hear sounds,—than it begins to acquire knowledge. In the exercise of these powers the infant takes great delight, not less in its kind than the philosophical man imagined by Buffon, except that in the child's case perception alone is exercised, in the man both perception and reflection are called into operation. (See Ch. IX. Goldsmith's animated Nature.) In the expansion, direction, and control of these faculties, and the ideas to which they give birth, consists the first rudiments of infant education.—That during the first months of a child's life its progress is highly satisfactory, [to itself] is evident to a very ordinary observer,—its first lispsings show how much of interest it finds in the appearances of the objects by which it is surrounded,—its first observations are lis-

tened to and receive that degree of attention which they demand; and it is not till the pressure of other domestic duties, or other inclinations divide the mother's care, that the inquiries of the infant are neglected, and it is left unnurtured, and often discouraged and disheartened. A child obtains its notions as we do, by seeing, sounding, feeling, smelling, and tasting objects. 'Do not meddle, my dear,' puts a stop to these processes. In cases of doubt and uncertainty it asks for information,—I cannot be troubled with questions,—forbids this mode of acquiring knowledge; and too often the infant is committed to the charge of persons who are either incapable of administering to the inquisitive and active exercise of its intellect, or who are not interested in promoting its culture and development. After a few years the child is placed at school, where, instead of that natural course being pursued which should unfold his mind, which should turn to account the observations and knowledge he has already stored up, and where, on these as a level, an ampler and a more solid foundation might be laid,—he is forced upon pursuits for which he has no inclination;—he is taught words instead of things, his memory is loaded with phrases and rules which he does not understand, and he is too often suffered to enter upon subjects without knowing to what good they tend. Thus his education commences; and thus a path which might be strewn with flowers to allure, is choked with brambles which impede his progress. This thorny track is travelled over, and, for a long time after teaching has commenced, the pupil has only confused notions floating in his mind, to the exclusion of that precise, perfect, and distinct knowledge which lies within the grasp of those faculties which nature courts him to exercise; and the development of which ought to be promoted by a well considered course of instruction,—one in harmony with their relation to surrounding objects."—*First publication of the Central Society of Education, England, 1837, p. 78.*

Corporeal punishment. "They [the majority of Scotch parochial Schools] still go on the old presumption, that mankind has got so much of the beast-nature in him,—is so entirely the bear ill-civilized of some philosophers,—that none but bear and bear arguments are likely to make impression on his sensibilities. But fear,—and, above all, a base fear, tainting, humbling down those very energies which it is the glory of civilization to raise up,—the fear of bodily suffering,—of the slave's lash and the tyrant's frown; if such a fear were a natural inmate of the youthful heart it should be expelled,—but by all gentle means, by kindly sympathy, and perfect good will. What a contradiction is the whole order of our social organization, if this be just, meet, and available to our training! We

plant oppression and the vile yielding to oppression,—a bondman's and a despot's spirit, (they are never disjoined)—in the youthful heart."—*Ib. p. 45.*

SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

Who can calculate the influence of school libraries? They make the rising generation readers and thinkers, and thus ensure the same in all succeeding generations. They spread abroad intelligence, they extinguish penuriousness and narrow mindedness. They employ leisure hours profitably; they are the antagonists of idleness and vice. Why are children taught to read if they are to have nothing to read? Furnishing the districts with libraries is but carrying out our common school system to its end. Then let us have good libraries—good in the number, and in the kind of books. Let each district begin with books sufficient to furnish each person in it with reading for a year. But above all do not omit to make additions every year. Some of the districts in order to procure fifty volumes this year, hire the money, expecting to pay the debt with next year's public fund. What is the consequence of this? Next year there is no addition to the library, the books have all been read, there is nothing more that is interesting, the books lie idle, and the library is forgotten and unnoticed. Let us have no borrowing, or rather no robbing of future years. Raise the money this year by subscription or by tax.

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